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MERRY COMEDY SEEN AT FULTON

"Arms and the Girl" Proves To Be Charming Play.

FAY BANTER IS DELIGHTFUL INGENUE

Good Acting Helps Comedy Trip Lightly to Success.

"Arms and the Girl," a comedy by Grant Stewart and Robert Baker. At the Fulton Theatre. Presented by William Harris, Jr.

THE CAST

Miss Cecilia	Maria Hunt
Tomboy	Ethel Interpol
Brother	Paul Capponi
Outfit Girl	Edna May
Baroness	Fay Bainter
Wife	John Darrow
Tea-room Operator	Carl Axmed
Lieutenant von Elbe	J. Malcolm Dean
Colonel Kranz	John Dehner
Speaker of Keys	Frances Byrne

By HEYWOOD BROUN.

A merry and amiable play was produced at the Fulton Theatre last night. "Arms and the Girl" is as pleasant an entertainment as New York has seen this season. It demands now and again a little credulity on the part of the spectator, but the consistently incredulous person has no right in a theatre. Moreover, the play has its moments of mush; but let him who is annoyed by stage lovemaking go spend the evening with his incredulous friend. They will not have as good time as those who saw "Arms and the Girl" last night, and laughed and thrilled because the playwrights asked for their emotions so gratifyingly.

One would hardly pick Belgium under the first rule of the Germans as the scene of a light comedy, but the authors have succeeded in finding phases of war which are distinctly amusing. As a matter of fact, the play merely fringes on the conflict.

Grant Stewart and Robert Baker have wisely introduced no discussion about the responsibility for the invasion of Belgium, and there are no atrocities. The Germans in the play are not at all bad lot. Their sentimentiality, and even their efficiency, serve to heighten the merriment of the story. Nobody is shot. At least nobody but the hero, who is, of course, by far the best person to shoot, since you can't hurt him much. Nor do the fortunes of the play hang upon the success of either side in the great war. George Sylvester Viereck could sit in the same box with Theodore Roosevelt at this play.

The plot is developed ingeniously. Ruth Shepard, a young American girl, under cover of circumstances, says that a fellow whom she has just met, is her fiance. But far her identification he would have been shot as a spy. Here German efficiency steps in. In order to test the truth of the girl's story the general orders a Belgian burgomaster to marry the couple. The bridegroom, although an acquaintance of only a few minutes, is an engaging chap, but unfortunately he has had a fiance as well as a husband.

The plot is developed ingeniously. The girl shares half the title of the play, and this by no means emphasizes her importance. Fay Bainter is endowed with youth, an extremely charming play of expression, and a sure deftness which marks her as one of the best young actresses New York has seen in ever and ever so long. She never lost her audience for a moment, and it is due to her skill alone that the final scene of the play is saved from dragging.

Miss Bainter has the nicest possible appreciation of comedy values. She can shade a line or bit of business, and it is no trouble at all for her to slip from one mood to another without any perceptible break. Moreover, there is nothing in her method which suggests an imitation of the work of any other actress. We believe that Miss Bainter played her first important role in New York last night and yet she seemed perfectly sure of herself. She has reason to be.

Cyril Scott does well as the hero. He is essentially a pleasant and cheery light comedian. Paul Dunn is excellent as the villain. Malcolm Dunn does not suggest anything Teutonic, but this young actor certainly fits into the niche which the mind has ready for the typical German officer. Henry Vogel gives a rich, full and human performance as the General. Francis Byrne does well as the bilked fiance. Ethel Interpol is pleasing in a minor role.

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